

January 18, 2002

TO: Members of the MAG Management Committee

FROM: Dawn M. Coomer, Multi-Modal Program Manager

SUBJECT: KICK-OFF MEETING FOR THE MAG HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT PLAN

Thursday, January 31, 2002 – 1:00 p.m.
MAG Offices, Suite 200 - Saguaro Room
302 North First Avenue, Phoenix

We are pleased to announce the kick-off meeting for the MAG High Capacity Transit Plan. This important project will address the feasibility of commuter rail along existing rail corridors, develop (if appropriate) a regional commuter rail implementation plan, identify other high capacity alternatives for existing rail corridors where commuter rail is not feasible, and identify new high capacity transit corridors. The planning efforts for the High Capacity Transit Plan developed in this work scope will be integrated with the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. We hope that you or your designated representative will attend this meeting.

At key milestones during the study, updates on the High Capacity Transit Plan will be provided to the Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee and other MAG committees. Development of the MAG High Capacity Plan will be conducted with the assistance of the High Capacity Transit Working Group (Working Group). Team members will provide input on various aspects of the study. Working Group members will be asked to commit to regular meetings and review of key deliverables. Prior to the meeting, please consider whether you or a representative wish to serve on the Working Group.

BACKGROUND

Commuter rail service has a number of features that may allow it to play an important role in providing an additional transportation option that complements other transit and roadway modes. A study is being initiated to evaluate the possible use of existing railroad corridors for commuter rail, estimate the costs and benefits of this service, and assess how it would interact with other modes. In some corridors, the operation of conventional commuter rail may encounter significant obstacles. Other high capacity transit technologies, such as bus rapid transit, elevated rail (including monorail), or subways, may be more appropriate in these corridors. There may still be other areas of the MAG region without railroad rights-of-way where new high capacity transit may be warranted. To pursue these opportunities for commuter rail and high capacity transit in the region,

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the MAG FY 2002 Unified Planning Work Program includes conducting a Regional High Capacity Transit Study.

MAG is currently developing a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that will replace the existing Long Range Transportation Plan. The RTP will provide a policy framework to guide transportation investments over the next twenty years. As a part of the RTP, performance measures will be developed to provide a balanced multi-modal transportation system that meets regional goals and objectives. The planning efforts for the High Capacity Transit Plan will be integrated with the development of the RTP.

An agenda for the meeting and an abbreviated work scope are included for your information. We welcome your participation in this initial meeting. Your attendance and participation at the early stages of this project are important. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call me or Eric Anderson at (602) 254-6300. E-mail can be sent to dcoomer@mag.maricopa.gov.

c: James M. Bourey, MAG
Eric Anderson, MAG
MAG Transportation Review Committee
Valley Metro Operations Staff
Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project Agency Oversight Team
Intergovernmental Coordinators